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WACD Week 9 Legislative Update

March 05, 2024

We are in the waning days of the legislative session, with Thursday March 7th only three days away. In this home stretch, the legislature is reconciling the differences between the House and Senate versions of the Operating, Capital, and Transportation supplemental budgets, as well as the approximately 160 other bills needing to iron out their differences before Sine Die. It is not always an easy process, bills die every year despite being passed by both chambers because the sides couldn't come together.

As we reach the end of session, our practice was been to consolidate our legislative information into one location, you can find all our reports and advocacy details on our [2024 Advocacy](#) page. There you will be able to view past Legislative Newsletters and our bill tracker, among other resources. If there are additional ways WACD can be of service to our membership during session, all you have to do is pick up the phone or write to [Tom](#), [Heather](#), or [Ryan](#)

1. Remaining Reconciliation Priorities

As shared in our 5 Things newsletter last week, WACD contacted the [operating budget negotiating team](#) with WACD's perspective on the need for Conservation Technical Assistance Funding and funding new staff positions at the Commission. That group of six legislators (Senators Robinson, Nguyen, and Wilson alongside Reps. Ormsby, Gregerson, and Corry) are finding compromises on differences between the two budgets.

As we shared, WACD prefers the House operating version when it comes to funding conservation districts. There is \$3.5 million for CTA in the House operating budget proposal with no funding in the Senate version. Additionally, the House funded the Commission's request for six new FTE's while the Senate only funded two positions. If you want to see the full breakdown of the competing versions done by Commission staff, click [this link here](#).

As per the membership's vote on Resolution 2023-17 in Wenatchee to support the Commission's 2024 budget request, WACD will be communicating with the negotiators our memberships support for the \$3.5 million and support for the Commission's operational funding. Feel free to reach out to your own legislators as well.

2. Legislative General Review

As part of her services, WACD's Lobbyist Brynn Brady writes a general review of major legislative topics covering the previous week. We share it with our membership so you are informed of non-district topics that are being discussed in Olympia. You can find her update on the [WACD Hub](#) breaking down highlights from this fast paced legislative session.

This week's review discusses the three initiatives heard by joint legislative committees last week, legislative retirement announcements, and criminal justice legislation.

3. Legislative Cut-Off

Friday March 1st was the final legislative cut-off before the session is scheduled to end on the 7th, where all bills must be approved (in some version) by both chambers. The final few days will be devoted to the reconciliation process, to ensure only one version of a bill is sent to the Governor's Desk.

[Our bill tracker](#) contained four bills that couldn't survive this hurdle:

- [HB 1997](#) (Concerning gubernatorial appointments for the state parks and recreation commission.)
- [HB 2330](#) (Addressing wildfire protection and mitigation.)
- [SB 5835](#) (Concerning transparency in rule making.)
- [SB 5837](#) (Codifying the state election database to publish, evaluate, and analyze certain election data.)

4. Legislative Announcements

Towards the end of every legislative session, Senators and Representatives will announce their plans to retire or run for a new position in the upcoming election. Here is a current list of those who have publicly spoken on their future plans:

- Senator Sam Hunt (retirement)
- Senator Andy Billig (retirement)
- Senator Kevin Van De Wege (Running for Public Lands Commissioner)
- Senator Mark Mullet (Running for Governor)
- Senator Emily Randall (Running for Congress)

- Senator Drew MacEwan (Running for Congress)
- Senator Paddy Kuderer (Running for Insurance Commissioner)
- Senator Manka Dhingra (Running for Attorney General)
- Senator Rebecca Saldana (Running for Public Lands Commissioner)
- Rep. J.T Wilcox (retirement)
- Rep. Mike Chapman (Running for Senate)
- Rep. Marcus Riccelli (Running for Senate)
- Rep. Jessica Bateman (Running for Senate)
- Rep. Spencer Hutchins (retirement)
- Rep. Jacqueline Maycumber (Running for Congress)

5. Thinking about 2025 Legislative Session

WACD is already thinking about the 2025 legislative session, though 2024's has not ended yet. As per adopted resolution, WACD is planning a spring legislative meeting with our membership in Ellensburg and online to begin preparing for the next biennium budget and policy priorities.

We will offer more details as they are available, but please hold your calendars for May 29-30.

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"American Kestrel", courtesy of [WSSC's Flickr account](#),
a treat for those who read to the bottom of the page.

Photo by Casey Lowder, Pine Creek CD



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